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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6772
INFO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE
RUEHGG/UN SECURITY COUNCIL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 0653
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4190
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 7743
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 5303
RUEHCHI/AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI 1176
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1087
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 RANGOON 001082

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DEPT FOR EAP/MLS, DRL, AND IO
PACOM FOR FPA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/31/2017

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [BM](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA: MANDALAY MONKS REPORTEDLY PREPARING TO
PROTEST

REF: A. RANGOON 1060

[1](#)B. RANGOON 1074

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Classified By: P/E Chief Leslie Hayden for Reasons 1.4 (b) & (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: According to an 88 Generation Students leader, monks in Mandalay are preparing to renew their peaceful protests. Although we have heard no reports of any new demonstrations today, the Australian Ambassador told the Charge 80 monks were dispersed by police yesterday when they attempted to gather at Shwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon. A recently released MP-elect told us he met with 88 Generation leader Htay Kywe for 30 minutes in Insein prison. He said Htay Kywe is in good health and good spirits, encouraged by the recent meeting between Aung San Suu Kyi and Aung Kyi. 30 members of the NLD Mandalay branch have been released. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) New 88 Generation leader Toe Kyaw Hlaing told us today he had been in contact with monks in Mandalay who said they were preparing to renew their peaceful marches. Inspired by the yesterday's march of monks in Pakokku, they want to begin marching again also. Toe Kyaw Hlaing said that 88 Generation is not quite ready to announce their boycott of regime-connected businesses (ref A). Gathering the necessary information has taken longer than expected, he elaborated, but emphasized the group is determined to go ahead.

[1](#)3. (C) We have been unable to confirm a rumor that there was another protest in Pakokku today, although the Australian Ambassador informed the Charge d'Affaires that approximately 80 monks attempted to gather at Shwe Dagon Pagoda yesterday but were dispersed by police. Last night at 10:00 p.m. the regime once again ordered the shutdown of Burma's internet (septel).

[1](#)4. (SBU) The regime continues to coerce people into participating in anti-American demonstrations. A contact of ours, who was forced to participate in such a rally in Rangoon yesterday morning, told us the participants made fun

of the officer who was leading the rally because his megaphone didn't work. Many participants refused to shout out the pro-government slogans and instead mockingly warned observers not to take their pictures, applaud, or give them water, an allusion to those arrested for doing so during the September protests. Our contact said the march began to get out of control when marchers were directed to shout slogans calling BBC a liar and instead shouted out "BBC every day!" or "BBC-good to listen!" and "BBC - We will buy you beer!"

15. (C) Recently released MPs-elect Pu Chin Sian Thang and Htaung Kho Htan told us that during their recent detention they were isolated in 10x13 cells. Although they were not physically tortured, Htaung Kho Htan said that when he became seriously ill and requested a doctor, he was not allowed to see one for three days. Pu Chin Sian Thang related he was interrogated one to four times a day, often during meal times or in the middle of the night. Htaung Kho Htan told us he was busy preparing for a meeting with Gambari this weekend, as he had been notified Gambari would be meeting with ethnic leaders. He was unwilling to tell us from whom he heard this.

16. (C) Pu Chin Sian Thang told us he had a secret meeting with Htay Kywe inside the prison for 30 minutes, arranged by a sympathetic prison guard. He reported that Htay Kywe is in good health and in good spirits, encouraged by news of the meeting between Aung San Suu Kyi and Aung Mye Thaw. Htay Kywe said he had not been physically tortured and was being treated well. Pu Chin Sian Thang told us he believes some members of Special Branch Police are becoming more sympathetic to their movement. He told us that he was only interrogated by Special Branch officers and not MI. They addressed him respectfully as "Chairman" (Pu Chin Sian Thang is chairman of the Zomi National Congress) and did not question him as vigorously as they should have, he stated. The questioning focused on whether or not MPs-elect were planning to establish a parallel government.

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17. (C) Pu Chin Sian Thang relayed that prison personnel had told him that around 1,500 activists and monks remain detained in Insein prison since the September arrests. Separately, the NLD confirmed to us today that 30 of their Mandalay members were released from Obo prison on October 30. 8 NLD members, including Mandalay NLD leader Daw Win Mya Mya, remain in jail.

18. (C) Comment: Yesterday's protest in Pakokku seems to have renewed some hope that the monks will continue their marches. There is palpable excitement among the activists and even the ordinary Burmese citizens we met today. The regime's staged demonstrations fool nobody, and the coerced participants become more irreverent every day. We certainly hope that Gambari meets with ethnic leaders and a broader cross-section of pro-democracy activists. We also recommend Gambari make every effort to meet with Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi, who are still in prison, since they represent an important shift of influence within the pro-democracy movement over the past year to a younger generation. A meeting with Gambari would signal to the regime that the world is concerned and watching closely how they are being treated.

VILLAROSA